

## About paws for Life

We created the Paws for Life Rescue to assist the many needy animals in Quebec who are victims of the high turnover rates at the high kill pounds some Quebec municipalities still contract with for "animal control" purposes. These pounds allocate a certain timeline for the adoption or reclamation of animals who are surrendered to them, following which they are scheduled for euthanization. Many people are unaware that, in Quebec, these euthanizations are often done at a specified time, 'en masse', by gassing, in order to save costs. The result is that dogs who have been at these pounds the longest are most in danger of being killed in this most ignoble manner. Effectively what has been created is an "animal death row".

When we created Paws for Life, many shelters were already beyond full and struggling to take in excess and last minute, urgent cases. We felt the need to create an emergency based rescue to help as many animals as possible that were in seriously, urgent need of rescuing. Our priority is really 'pulling' the animals most at risk of being killed next off of this 'death row'. This is our primary objective and what separates us from other rescue groups and rehoming groups.

We currently have about 70 animals placed with foster homes - of course this number fluctuates according to the time of year. The December holiday season and the July 'house moving' periods are our busiest periods as so many animals are surrendered during this period.

We have main volunteers who perform the following functions: (i) adoption coordinator; (ii) vet coordinator; (iii) foster coordinator; (iv) verification of foster and adoption references; and (v) transport coordination. As we function on a very tight timeline and have to meet very short deadlines, we rely on many other volunteers as and when they are available to assist us in rescuing the most urgent cases and many who cannot foster but kindly offer to transport animals from pounds to foster homes.

Our volunteers are exactly that, volunteers, and they dedicate their time, energy and devotion to helping animals. They are kind hearted, active, local people who are just trying to help. We take what assistance we can get and are just grateful that there are people out there who are willing to help us.

## Screening and Fosters

Fosters undergo an application process and we do our best to ensure that we get the "right match" for a particular foster home. Each dog has different needs, many have special needs and we do our best to identify these as only certain foster homes can be good matches for these animals. Any honest rescue network will tell you that, as rescue animals cannot speak for themselves, often have unknown pasts and have often been through difficult experiences, it is impossible to predict animal behaviour with 100% accuracy. Our fosters generally understand that and understand that our priority is to find these animals temporary homes so that they are not put down. The adoption process is really where long-term compatibility is assessed.

We have a foster coordinator dedicated to contacting and following up with every foster to see how each dog is adjusting. We communicate regularly with our fosters to ask for updates and always make our best efforts to respond to our emails on the same day they are received. We are,

of course, always looking for additional help, so we would ask all members of the public who can truly dedicate their time to contact us.

We have policies that all main volunteers follow, and we do our best to ensure that they are followed by both (i) temporary fosters; and (ii) adoptive parents. All animals, which are adopted out through Paws for Life after being fostered are fully vetted including sterilization, so we have zero concern for breeding with respect to our adopted animals.

Furthermore, we have separate foster and adoption application processes as there is a big difference between temporarily fostering a dog in urgent need and making a lifelong commitment to it. We ask all our foster and adoptive parents to sign formal contracts in which they agree to abide by specified ethical conduct. We are very particular regarding whom we allow to formally adopt and will often reject potential adopters if we do not feel that they are the right match or a good home for the animals. Our application for adoption form runs to 9 pages and every single response is analyzed thoroughly. Moreover, vet references and personal references are always verified! As we have a volunteer dedicated solely to checking references.

Finally all our animals are fully vetted, de-worming, vaccines and sterilization is regularly performed on all dogs who are formally adopted. We go above and beyond on medical we have funded leg surgeries on a few of our rescued dogs including dogs like Willow. As well as extensive eye surgery on dogs (such as Max). Any meds that dogs are stated to require after their vet check ups are provided these medications as well as further tests and treatments (we have looked after many dogs with parvo which is a very expensive treatment). Of course we keep copy of all our medical bills to demonstrate this.

We are aware that some individuals have mentioned us unfavourably and we will address their concerns. It should be understood that vetting is done at our designated veterinarians and in the case of the cat Lula her sterilization was in fact scheduled by Paws for Life and also did take care of the vetting and vaccinations for Queenie and attempted to arrange a sterilization appointment after she was rescued from pound while already being pregnant.

We do our best to place our animals in good foster homes until they are formally adopted but not all fosters fully understand the extent of the responsibility which comes from taking in an animal from a shelter and the behavioural problems which may sometimes manifest themselves once they have been fostered. Animals cannot communicate in our language and it is impossible to give a guarantee with respect to an animals' future behaviour. However, considering the hard, often heartbreaking nature of the work we do, the tight timelines that we work under and the urgency of our work, pulling animals from euthanasia rows, it is rather unsavoury to be accused of wrongdoing when very few individuals within the Montreal Community are even prepared to confront the situations we deal with on a daily basis, let alone, continually try to rescue these animals who have fallen through the cracks of our poor animal rights legislation. We are unaware of any volunteer organizations who are dedicated just to pulling animals of death row and it is extremely demoralising to be accused of wrongdoing when we do what very few are willing or care enough to do. We really do try to serve our community and we believe that the focus of your next interview should be the municipalities who take out contracts with high kill

shelters or individuals who run high kill shelters, not the community volunteers who try to make a difference.

Paws for life